



Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

eastern and western edges of Iowa and scattered in suitable habitats

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

American lotus

Nelumbo lutea

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta - flowering plants

Features

The American lotus is an aquatic, perennial herb with underwater stems. Each single, round leaf may grow up to two feet across. The leaf is attached to the stalk at the center and may be floating or raised above the water's surface. The flower is solitary and rises above the water. It is pale yellow and may grow up to 10 inches wide. The fruits are acorn-like and up to one-half inch in diameter, sunken in a woody receptacle.

Natural History

The American lotus grows in standing water in lakes, ponds, and rivers. It flowers from July through September. It may form dense colonies that are several acres in size. Its leaves provide shelter for fish and wildlife and waterfowl eat the fruits.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; interior rivers and streams